

## 9 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

The 9 Airlift Squadron provides global reach with unique outsized and oversized airlift capability. The "Proud Pelicans" provide worldwide airlift to meet Department of Defense, Department of State and Presidential mobility requirements. The unit supports global engagement through direct delivery of time-critical theater deployment assets and ensures combat readiness of AMC active-duty C-5 airlift crews.

### LINEAGE

9 Transport Squadron constituted, 1 Jan 1938  
Activated, 1 Dec 1940  
Redesignated 9 Troop Carrier Squadron, 4 Jul 1942  
Inactivated, 15 Oct 1946  
Redesignated 9 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 10 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to active service, 1 May 1951  
Inactivated, 9 May 1951  
Redesignated 9 Troop Carrier Squadron, Heavy, 19 Mar 1953  
Activated, 20 Jun 1953  
Discontinued and inactivated, 18 Jan 1963  
Activated, 13 Nov 1964  
Organized, 1 Jan 1965  
Redesignated 9 Military Airlift Squadron, 8 Jan 1966  
Discontinued and inactivated, 8 Sep 1968  
Activated, 1 Apr 1971  
Redesignated 9 Airlift Squadron, 1 Dec 1991

### STATIONS

Patterson Field, OH, 1 Dec 1940

Brookley Field, AL, 18 Sep 1941  
Camp Williams, WI, 24 May 1942  
Dodd Field, TX, 18 Sep 1942  
Stuttgart, AR, 11 Nov 1942  
Victorville, CA, 18 Dec 1942  
Ft Sumner AAFld, NM, 4 Mar 1943  
Lawson Field, GA, 7 May 1943  
Grenada AAFld, MS, 3 Jun 1943–17 Jan 1944  
Hickam Field, TH, 21 Feb 1944  
Abemama Island, 27 Mar 1944  
Saipan, 4 Aug 1944  
Guam, Jul–15 Oct 1946  
Floyd Bennett NAS, NY, 27 Jun 1949–9 May 1951  
Altus AFB, OK, 20 Jun 1953  
Donaldson AFB, SC, 15 Oct 1953–18 Jan 1963  
Dover AFB, DE, 1 Jan 1965–8 Sep 1968  
Dover AFB, DE, 1 Apr 1971

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

63 Transport (later, 63 Troop Carrier) Group, 1 Dec 1940  
Seventh Air Force, 3 Feb 1944  
VI Air Service Area Command, 25 Jul 1945  
Army Air Forces, Middle Pacific, 15 Dec 1945  
Pacific Air Command, 1 Jan 1946  
Far East Air Service Command, 9 Jan 1946  
54 Troop Carrier Wing, 15 Jan 1946  
374 Troop Carrier Group, c. Feb 1946  
54 Troop Carrier Wing, 15 May 1946  
403 Troop Carrier Group, 31 May–15 Oct 1946  
63 Troop Carrier Group, 27 Jun 1949–9 May 1951  
63 Troop Carrier Group, 20 Jun 1953–18 Jan 1963  
Military Air Transport Service, 13 Nov 1964  
1607 Air Transport Wing, 1 Jan 1965  
436 Military Airlift Wing, 8 Jan 1966–8 Sep 1968  
436 Military Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1971  
436 Operations Group, 1 Dec 1991

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-34, 1940  
C-33, 1940  
C-39, 1940  
C-50, 1942  
C-53, 1942  
C-47, 1942

C-46, 1945  
C-54, 1946  
C-47, 1949  
C-124C, 1953  
C-124, 1965  
C-141, 1966  
C-5, 1971

## **COMMANDERS**

1<sup>st</sup> Lt Herman E. Hurst, 1 Dec 1940  
Capt Robert H. Monroe, 21 Aug 1941  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt James L. Evans, Unknown  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Thomas D. Hagood, 31 Jul 1942  
Capt Jack m. Smith, Unknown  
Capt Robert I. Simkins, 1 Jan 1946  
Capt Robert T. Best, Unknown  
Unknown, 27 June 1949 – 9 May 1951  
Lt Col Dewey R. Bridges, 1954  
Maj Lawrence F. Uebel, 1955  
Lt Col Dewey R. Bridges, 1958 – 1960  
Lt Col Foy B. Frost, 1960 - 1962  
Unknown, 1962 – 18 Jan 1963  
Lt Col Vernon N. Luber, 1968  
Col Barr D. Younker, 1 Apr 1971  
Col Richard G. Ohlheiser, 9 Jan 1973  
Lt Col Richard E. Leal, 1 Mar 1975  
Lt Col James E. Stone, 25 Feb 1977  
Col John G. Stephen, Unknown  
Lt Col Frank J. Van Cura, Unknown  
Lt Col Robin S. Purdie, 13 Oct 1980  
Lt Col John D. Szostak, Jr. 8 Oct 1981  
Lt Col John A. Goyette, 17 Jun 1983  
Lt Col John T. Loughran, 19 Jun 1985  
Lt Col George W. Findlay, 3 Mar 1987  
Lt Col Jon N. Torblaa, 7 Dec 1988  
Lt Col Stephen M. Jones, 20 Jun 1990  
Lt Col David S. Gray, 30 Jun 1991  
Lt Col Gary Kirsteatter, 11 Jun 1992  
Lt Col Marshall K. Sabol, 27 Jun 1994  
Lt Col Robert Allardice, 12 Feb 1996  
Lt Col James W. Farrar, 13 Jun 1997  
Lt Col David W. Smith, 1 Sep 1998  
Lt Col Christopher E. Coley, 18 Feb 2000  
Lt Col Thomas J. Sharpey, 16 Jun 2003

Lt Col Thomas E. Murphy, Unknown  
Lt Col Darren V. James, 13 Nov 2006  
Lt Col Kenneth T. Bibb, 18 Jun 2008  
Lt Col Todd A. Garrett, 22 Oct 2009  
Lt Col Craig M. Harmon, 26 May 2011  
Lt Col Robert V. Butkovich, 22 Feb 2013  
Lt Col Matthew S. Husemann, 8 Aug 2014  
Lt Col Charles D. Throckmorton, 8 Jul 2016  
Lt Col Justin D. Ballinger, 19 Jan 2018  
Lt Col M. Habbestad, 18 Jul 2019

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater  
Global War on Terrorism Service

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Air Offensive, Japan  
New Guinea  
Eastern Mandates  
Bismark Archipelago  
Western Pacific  
Leyte  
Ryukyus

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Meritorious Unit Award:  
1 Jan 2012 – 31 Dec 2012

### **Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

2 Mar–31 May 1955  
1 Jul 1957–10 Dec 1962  
18 Sep–15 Dec 1960  
9 Sep–13 Dec 1961  
13 Nov–18 Dec 1967  
1 Jan–8 Sep 1968  
1 Sep 1971–30 Jun 1972  
13 Oct–14 Nov 1973  
1 Jan 1974–30 Apr 1975

1 May 1975–31 May 1976  
1 Jun 1976–31 May 1978  
1 Jun 1978–31 May 1979  
1 Jun 1981–31 May 1982  
1 Jun 1982–31 May 1984  
1 August 1992 – 31 July 1994  
1 July 1997 – 30 June 1999  
1 July 2000 - 30 June 2001  
1 July 2001 - 30 June 2002  
1 July 2002 - 30 June 2003  
1 July 2003 - 30 June 2004  
1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005  
1 Sep 2007-31 Aug 2009  
1 Jan 2010-31 Dec 2010  
1 Jan 2011-31 Dec 2011  
1 Jan 2011–31 Dec 2011  
1 Jan 2013–30 Sep 2014  
1 Oct 2015–30 Sep 2017  
1 Oct 2017–30 Sep 2019  
1 Oct 2019–30 Sep 2020

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
1 Apr 1966–[8 Sep 1968]  
[8 Apr 1971]–28 Jan 1973

#### EMBLEM





On a Light Blue disc, bordered Black, a stylized White pelican, beak and feet Orange, holding a group of paratroopers in silhouette Black in the bowl of the beak. The insignia expresses the task, purpose and spirit of the squadron. (Approved, 10 Feb 1943)

**MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The unit was originally constituted as the 9 Transport Squadron on 1 January 1938 and activated on 1 December 1940. The squadron reported to the 63rd Transport Group at Patterson Field, Ohio, where squadron members conducted pilot replacement training in the C-33 *Debonair*, C-34 *Airmaster*, and the C-39 airframes. In 1942, the unit became the 9 Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS) and transported cargo and personnel for the Mobile Air Depot in the continental United States and the Caribbean. The unit also trained airdropping paratroopers prior to moving to Camp Williams, Wisconsin, on 24 May 1942. During the next few months, the squadron's aircrews used the C-50 to train in glider towing at various locations, including Arkansas, California and New Mexico.

The 9 TCS moved to Hickam Field, Hawaii, early in 1944, and became part of a joint Navy/Army Air Corps transport group. In this joint group they flew the C-46 and C-47. The squadron's mission consisted of transporting cargo, mail, and passengers, as well as the air evacuation of wounded victims. Squadron aircrews dropped supplies (ammunition, blood and weapons) to U.S. Marine combatants on the Pacific Island of Iwo Jima and flew deforestation spraying missions over Okinawa.

The 9 continued to fly spraying missions and transport routes after the war from Saipan, in the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. The unit inactivated on 15 October 1946 and reactivated in the Air Force reserve on 27 June 1949. The squadron again inactivated at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, in 1951 and reactivated on 19 March 1953 at Donaldson Air Force Base, South Carolina, flying the C-124. They participated in maneuvers, exercises, and the airlift of personnel and cargo to many points throughout the world. Some of their achievements during this time period included assisting in the evacuation of Hungarian refugees, supporting the construction of the Eastern missile test range and supporting the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line Sites near the Arctic Circle.

The 9 TCS began its part of the DEW Line support in February 1956, in a program known as "Operation Ice Cube." Flights were made from Dover AFB to individual air strips at the DEW Line sites, all being located in Northern Canada. These flights were conducted until the early 1970s under a program called "Cool Mule."

The 9 TCS would discontinue and inactivate in January 1963 with the closing of Donaldson AFB. The squadron reactivated on 13 November 1964 and redesignated as the 9 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) on 8 January 1966. During this time the squadron settled down and began to grow roots at its new home, Dover Air Force Base (DAFB), Delaware. At Dover, the squadron flew a broad spectrum of missions, which included support of presidential trips to Southeast Asia and scientific expeditions in the Antarctic. The unit continued to fly the C-124 from 1965 to 1966 and then switched to the new cargo plane, the C-141 from 1966 to 1968. The 9 MAS inactivated in 1968 and reactivated on 8 April 1971 eagerly awaiting the arrival of the first C-5.

Evacuation of refugees from Southeast Asia, Apr 1975.

Since receiving the C-5 the squadron supported nearly every major airlift operation throughout the world. The 9 MAS received the coveted Mackay Trophy from the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, for the most meritorious flight of the year in 1977. Aircrews flew a non-stop mission originating in Chicago, Illinois, and ending at Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). They airlifted a 40-ton super conducting magnet and 45 tons of related equipment. This mission created an aeronautical first. For the first time in the history of aviation an aircraft with so heavy a payload traveled so far (5,900 miles) non-stop. It also garnered the Cheney Trophy for its support missions to the Mozambique flood areas. In 1978, an aircrew from the 9 co-received the Mackay Trophy with a 3 MAS aircrew.

Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and NOBLE EAGLE.

Southwest Asia, Aug 1990–Jul 1991

The 1980s witnessed a commitment to excellence by members of the 9. Some of these accomplishments included squadron aircrews supporting U.S. efforts in rescue operations of civilians off the island of Grenada, flying the first C-5 mission to Panama in support of Operation JUST CAUSE.

A squadron aircrew became one of the first to fly a C-5 mission into war-torn Mogadishu, Somalia, delivering desperately needed M-1 tanks and personnel. They accomplished this feat by performing a 20-hour quadruple air-refueling mission in support of Operation RESTORE HOPE. The 9 AS also flew the first C-5 mission to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, supporting efforts to restore that country's democracy. On 22 November 1994, a 9 AS aircrew flew 20 hours non-stop from Kazakhstan, the former Soviet Union, to DAFB delivering unprotected weapons-grade uranium. The tremendous success of the mission aided the United Nations in the reduction of nuclear capability around the world. That mission would be repeated in April 1998 when a 9 AS aircrew evacuated more weapons-grade uranium from the former Soviet state of Georgia to a safe haven in Europe. Other achievements included the first ever C-5 mission to the Ukraine and missions to Moscow and Kiev in support of President Clinton's visit to Russia. In September 1995, six 9 AS crews flew several relief missions to the Caribbean after Hurricane Marilyn devastated Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In July 1996, the 9 AS earned the 21st Air Force Aircrew Excellence Award for a mission that was diverted in flight to pick up a higher priority mission and ended up crossing the Atlantic Ocean twice in a 24-hour period.

1997 saw the Pelicans supporting Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR with missions to the Bosnian area of responsibility.

In April 1997, the 9 AS brought back communications equipment and medical supplies to Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, to aid in the humanitarian relief effort for the flood victims of the U.S. northern central plains.



In 1999, the Pelicans supported disaster relief teams after an earthquake decimated Taipei, Taiwan, in September, by providing relief flights for multiple countries after three hurricanes hit the area. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 again put the 9 AS on the world's center stage. The Pelicans leaned forward, generating more aircrews than ever during their support of America's fight against terrorism.

By the end of calendar year 2001, the 9 AS flew over 535 sorties and delivered more than 25.5 million pounds of cargo in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE, and INFINITE JUSTICE. Aircrews transported equipment and personnel to new locations in the countries of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These taskings earned the squadron the 21st Air Force best squadron of the year award. The beginning of 2002 found the U.S. continuing its war on terrorism and USAF Officials chose the Pelicans to fly the first-ever C-5 combat mission into Afghanistan.

The 9 also flew the first-ever mission in a night coalition RED FLAG exercise, as well as planning, organizing and executing the first-ever post-9/11 Air Mobility Command air show. In 2003, the Pelicans again answered America's call by surging to a 300 percent operations tempo, leading up to and continuing through Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The squadron flew 11,161 hours and moved 106,767 million pounds of cargo and nearly 23,000 troops during this surge.

The Pelicans delivered the war fighter to the fight during OIF and OEF. Following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, the Pelicans received the honor to be the first aircrew into Balad Air Base, Iraq. This location proved to be a critical hub of activity for ongoing operations in Iraq. For a short time, Balad surpassed DAFB as the busiest cargo airport in the world and by far the busiest in the AOR. The Pelicans sent a special operations low level flying crew into Baghdad International Airport. The squadron deployed four night-vision goggle observers to Moron, Spain, in order to ensure Baghdad operations continued unimpeded.

In 2004 the Pelicans continued to serve in the fight against global terrorism. They safely executed 1,129 C-5 missions and transported over 77 million pounds of cargo and 20,000 troops. The 9 AS flew more than 8,000 hours to more than a dozen nations.

In 2006, the 9 successfully trained the first ever Night Vision Goggle Airland capable C-5 aircrew. This ensured continued covert combat viability for the massive airlifter. The 9 returned to Afghanistan as the only C-5 crew to fly in that theater in more than two years by delivering needed outsized emergency equipment to the remote city of Herat. While still fully engaged in the Global War on Terrorism and OIF, the Pelicans answered the call to deliver humanitarian aid supplies to the victims of the Southeast Asian tsunami as well as to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

On 16 August 2001, at 1137 PST, a C-5A, S/N 70-0461, experienced nose landing gear separation during takeoff roll at Travis Air Force Base, California. The C-5A, assigned to the 9 Airlift Squadron, 436th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, was returning to Dover Air Force Base after a 7-day Pacific Channel mission. A Pacific Channel mission is one that departs from the West Coast of the United States for Pacific Air Force (PACAF) destination(s). After

takeoff power was initiated and during the takeoff roll at approximately 100 knots, the nose landing gear separated from the aircraft. The crew heard a loud bang, simultaneously with debris hitting the aircraft, the nose of the aircraft rising momentarily and then dropping to the runway. The aircraft commander initiated takeoff rejection procedures and was able to bring the aircraft to a complete stop on the runway. The crew and passengers were able to egress without injury or fatalities. During preflight inspection, the nose landing gear shock strut secondary chamber was found to be low on nitrogen pressure. The mishap aircraft crew chief serviced the nose landing gear front strut by adding nitrogen. Servicing of the nose landing gear shock strut secondary chamber was accomplished in violation of Air Force Technical Manual, Ground Handling and Servicing. The primary cause of the mishap was over-pressurization of the secondary chamber of the nose landing gear shock strut by the mishap aircraft crew chief who failed to follow the technical order procedures for proper nose landing gear shock strut service.

The 9 Airlift Squadron at Dover AFB, Del., became the first all-C-5M Super Galaxy squadron in the Air Force after flying its last C-5B sortie. The C-5B-aircraft No. 86-0020-arrived home to Dover on Monday from a mission to the Middle East. Water cannons from the base's fire brigade ceremoniously sprayed down the aircraft as it taxied back to its parking slot for a final shutdown. The base "has largest aerial port on the East Coast; it [makes] sense to put the most capable, strategic airlifter right next to it, so that we can move more cargo faster," said Lt. Col. Dave Herbison, 9 AS operations director, when discussing the new C-5M model. Upgraded with more efficient engines, a variety of reliability-enhancing modifications, and a glass cockpit, the Super Galaxy "allows us to do more things," he added after the C-5B's "fini" flight. The Air Force will convert aircraft 86-0020, like all other C-5Bs, to the Super Galaxy configuration. 2012

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

USAF Accident Investigation Board Reports.